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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Ad Hoc Working Group on Trade Efficiency
Second Session
Geneva, 15 November 1993
Item 1 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. Facilitating trade

3. First evaluation of the Trade Point programme

4. Preparatory work for the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency

5. Provisional agenda for the third session of the Working Group

6. Other business

7. Adoption of the report of the Working Group to the Board.

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II. Background and purpose

1. In February 1992, UNCTAD VIII's Final Act (Cartagena Commitment) created an Ad Hoc Working Group on Trade Efficiency. Pursuant to this agreement, the Trade and Development Board, through its decision 398 (XXXVIII) of 7 May 1992, established the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

2. Held from 16 to 20 November 1992, the first session of the Working Group focused on the concept of trade efficiency in the area of trade-related information and technologies. At the end of that session, the Group adopted a work programme, as well as the the provisional agenda for its second session (TD/B/39(2)/9-TD/B/WG.2/3, annexes I and II).

3. Also, at it first session, the Working Group requested the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to establish a core advisory group of experts and called for the organization of a workshop on information flows to build trade efficiency. Following consultations held through the Bureau of the Working Group, it was felt that more member countries would be in a position to participate actively in both the Core Advisory Group of Experts and the Workshop on Information Flows to Build Trade Efficiency if both were convened in conjunction with the second session of the Working Group. Consequently, the first day of the session will be devoted mainly to these two meetings.

4. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Trade Efficiency has an essential role to play in the preparation of the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency (Columbus, Ohio, United States, 17-21 October 1994). Practical results are expected from the Symposium in a number of areas including customs, trade facilitation, banking, insurance, transport, information and telecommunications. Thus, it is essential that delegations participating in the meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group include representatives who have a practical knowledge and experience of concerns, objectives and practices in these areas. The UNCTAD secretariat therefore strongly encourages member governments to include in their delegations to the second Session of the Ad Hoc Working Group the relevant practitioners of international trade and related functions. The participation of the directors and coordinators of Trade Points on the one hand and of practitioners of trade facilitation on the other would be of particular interest.

5. By inviting individuals and organizations to exchange practical experiences, the Working Group should be able to elucidate the challenges and opportunities of greater efficiency in international trade. This session of the Working Group offers an opportunity for a rare gathering of expertise in this area. The attached tentative timetable has been designed to make the most profitable use of time available during this session. Meetings will start at the precise time announced. The time devoted to presentations will be strictly limited to allow in-depth discussions on the issues being addressed. Each meeting should lead to practical recommendations for the future work of the Ad Hoc Working Group and to specific contributions for the preparation of the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency.

III. Suggested organization of work[1]

Monday, 15 November

CAGE Meeting

First meeting of the Trade Efficiency Core Advisory Group of Experts (CAGE)

6. Called for by the Working Group at the end of its first session (16-20 November 1992), the Trade Efficiency Core Advisory Group of Experts (CAGE) could not be convened as early as initially hoped, for a variety of technical reasons. Consultations between the Chairman of the Working Group, the Bureau of the Working Group and the secretariat led to the conclusion that it might be both economical and practical to organize the first session of the Advisory Group in coordination with the Second Session of the Working Group.

Opening meeting

15.00 **Agenda item 1**
Adoption of the agenda

15.30 **Informal session**

Workshop on Information Flows to Build Trade Efficiency

18.00 Meeting adjourns

Opening meeting

7. The provisional agenda contained in the present document will be proposed for adoption. It should be noted that, during the course of the session, a number of 'background presentations' will be provided. For example, and in connection with item 2 of the provisional agenda, the Centre Universitaire de Calcul de Toulouse (France) will present its ICS (International Commercial Services) software.

8. Initially foreseen to take place earlier in the year, the Workshop on Information Flows to Build Trade Efficiency will be organized as an informal meeting of the Working Group. This workshop is organized in cooperation with the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT. Practical information and communication tools available at the Trade Points will be presented and discussed.

[1] All participations indicated are subject to confirmation.

Tuesday, 16 November

Morning meeting
Item 2 : Facilitating trade
UNECE-WP4/UNCTAD

10.00 UNECE-Working Party 4 and Trade Efficiency: presentation by Mr R. Walker, Chaiman of UNECE-WP4.GE1
10.30 Facilitating Trade, presentation by the secretariat of WP4
10.50 Summary presentation of the UNCTAD/WP4 compendium of trade facilitation measures
11.20 Discussion
13.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 2 : Facilitating trade

9. This meeting will be organized jointly by Working Party 4 of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE-WP4) and UNCTAD. The Chairman of WP4.GE1 will make an introductory presentation of the work of WP4 and its relevance to trade efficiency. Additional presentations will be made by the WP4 secretariat on the overall concept of trade facilitation. These presentations will be followed by a summary introduction of the Compendium of Trade Facilitation Measures (Document TD/B/WG.2/6). This document, prepared in cooperation with the UN/ECE Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) was discussed by WP.4 at its September 1993 session. Comments that the Ad Hoc Working Group and its members would wish to make on this document will be brought to the attention of WP.4 at its March 1994 session.

Afternoon meeting
Item 2 : Facilitating trade (continued)

15.00 Introduction of the 'Draft Guidelines for Better Trade Practices'
15.45 Presentation of Trade Facilitation activities: the United Kingdom's example
16.15 Discussion
18.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 2 : Facilitating trade (continued)

10. Document TD/B/WG.2/6/Add.1 ('Draft Guidelines for Better Trade Practices') was prepared by Mr Richard Dale of SITPRO, the United Kingdom's trade facilitation body. Mr Dale will present the main features of the document and give examples based on the United Kingdom's experience. The content of the document is aimed at providing basic information for the consideration by the Ad Hoc Working Group of major issues relating to trade efficiency and gives a broad overview of the type of recommendations that may be proposed to the Symposium.

Wednesday, 17 November

Morning meeting
Agenda Item 3
First evaluation of
the Trade Point Programme

10.00 General introduction (UNCTAD Secretariat)
10.30 Presentation by NUTS Technology (Hong Kong): portable videoconferencing for the Trade Points
11.30 Discussion
13.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 3 : First evaluation of the Trade Point Programme

11. After a few months of operation of a limited number of Trade Points, the secretariat will present a preliminary status report (document TD/B/WG.2/7) of the Trade Point Programme, largely based on the self-evaluations provided orally by those Trade Point directors and coordinators ready to so. Document TD/B/WG.2/7/Add.1 (Trade Point Programme: concept and implementation) includes basic information material prepared by the secretariat on the creation and operation of Trade Points. A demonstration will be made by NUTS Technology (Hong Kong) of a video-conferencing system used in the Bangkok Trade Point. This will help to illustrate the type of efficient solutions for trade which the Trade Points can help to test and promote.

Afternoon meeting
Item 3 - First evaluation of the Trade Point Programme (continued)

15.00 Presentation of national experiences by Trade Point managers
17.00 Discussion
18.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 3 : First evaluation of the Trade Point Programme (continued)

12. The specific experiences of existing Trade Points will be presented. To the largest extent possible, these presentations will be made by the Trade Point managers themselves, who will be encouraged to describe both their successes and their difficulties in establishing and running Trade Points. The following main points should be addressed:

- How to set up a Trade Point: legal, institutional and practical problems;
- How to associate the local or national trading community in the creation of a Trade Point;
- Collection, processing and dissemination of trade information;
- Relationships among Trade Points (exchange of services, invoicing, etc);
- Information to be provided by the Pilot Trade Points to the Symposium;
- Participation of service providers (Customs, transport, banks, insurance).

Thursday, 18 November

Morning meeting
Agenda Item 4: Preparatory work for the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency

10.00 General presentation
10.30 Site and facilities (audio-visual presentation)
11.00 Notional schedule
12.30 Discussion
13.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 4: Preparatory work for the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency

13. After a general introduction by the secretariat, an audio-visual presentation will describe the site and facilities of Columbus. The notional schedule of the Symposium will then be introduced by the Chairperson of the Ad hoc Working Group. In this context, further information will be provided on the "matchmaking" component of the Symposium.

Afternoon meeting
Agenda Item 4: Preparatory work for the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency (continued)

15.00 Sectoral preparations:
- Procedures
- Customs
- Banking
- Insurance
- Transport
- Telecommunications
- Information

17.00 Discussion
18.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 4: Preparatory work for the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency (continued)

14. Specific presentations will be made of the modalities of work and expected results of such work in the following main areas of concern of the Symposium: procedures, Customs, banking, insurance, transport, telecommunications and information. For each of these sectors, the accent will be put on the work which remains to be done until the Symposium and the best ways of finalizing it.

Friday, 19 November

Morning meeting

Agenda item 5 - Provisional agenda for the third session of the Ad Hoc Working Group

10.00 Discussion

Agenda item 6 - Other business

12.30 Discussion

13.00 Meeting adjourns

Item 5 - Provisional agenda for the third session of the Ad Hoc Working Group

Item 6 - Other business

15. Drawing on the discussion of the Thursday afternoon meeting, proposals will be made for the formulation of an agenda for the third session of the Working Group. The possible responsibilities of the Working Group and its related mechanisms (in particular the Core Advisory Group of Experts) will be addressed.

Concluding meeting

Agenda item 7 - Adoption of the report

15.00 Presentation and adoption of the report
15.30 Conclusions
16.00 Session adjourns

Item 7 - Adoption of the report

16. Following the discussions under item 5 and the adoption of the report by the Group, an extended CAGE meeting could take place immediately after the closing of the session.

CAGE Meeting